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Open-ended Working Group taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations[1]

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Item 5 of the agenda
Taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations

Position paper on nuclear disarmament by the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC)[2]

Submitted by the Dominican Republic in its capacity of President *pro tempore* of CELAC

Introduction

1. The Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) recalls our deep concern for the threat to humanity caused by the ongoing existence of nuclear weapons, their use or the threat of their use, due to the potential damages on health, food security, climate change, among others, as well as the lack of capacity of countries and organizations to face a humanitarian catastrophe of such magnitude. We recall also the results of the Conferences on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons held in Oslo, Nayarit and Vienna and we declare that, such weapons must not be used again, under any circumstances, and that the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons constitutes a violation of the United Nations Charter and a violation of International Law and International Humanitarian Law, and a crime against humanity.

2. CELAC emphasizes our condemnation of the enhancement of existing nuclear weapons and the development of new types of nuclear weapons, which is inconsistent with the obligation of adopting effective measures towards nuclear disarmament. CELAC declares its rejection to nuclear testing and all strategic concepts for the defense and security justifying the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, or based on the promotion and establishment of military alliances and policies based on nuclear weapons and on policies of nuclear deterrence.

[1] Established pursuant to resolution 70/33 of the General Assembly of the United Nations.

[2] Member States of CELAC: Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Plurinational State of Bolivia, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago and Uruguay.

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3. CELAC also reiterates that cessation of all test explosions of nuclear weapons and all other nuclear explosions, by restricting the development and qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons and ending the manufacture of advanced new types of nuclear weapons, constitutes an effective measure of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation in all its aspects.

CELAC and nuclear disarmament

4. CELAC reiterates the value and importance to international peace and security of the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (Treaty of Tlatelolco) and its protocols, which established the first Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in a densely populated area.

5. CELAC reaffirms its commitment for the consolidation of Latin America and the Caribbean as a "zone of peace" as proclaimed during the Second CELAC Summit held in La Havana, Cuba, on 29 January 2014, where it was declared the continuous obligation of the States in the region to promote nuclear disarmament as a primary objective and to contribute to the complete and general disarmament as well as to strengthening trust among nations.

6. CELAC recalls that the Heads of State and Government of CELAC endorsed the Humanitarian Pledge during the Community Summit held in Belén, Costa Rica, on 28 and 29 January 2015. We welcome its endorsement by 122 States and therefore urge Sates that have not done it to do so.

7. CELAC regrets the continued non-fulfillment of the obligations of the nuclear-armed States relating to nuclear disarmament under Article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the commitments of the NPT Review Conferences. We recall that the NPT does not establish any right to the indefinite possession of nuclear weapons by any state, but recognizes a transitional status, subject to compliance with Article VI.

8. CELAC reiterates, on the twentieth anniversary of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), the vital importance and urgency of the entry into force of that Treaty and urge those countries listed in annex II that have not done so, to sign or ratify this important international instrument as soon as possible. We also underline the urgent need for progress on this and other effective measures of nuclear disarmament, so to give effect to Article VI of the NPT.

Multilateral negotiations

9. CELAC is committed with the beginning of a multilateral diplomatic process for the negotiation of a legally binding instrument for the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons in a transparent, irreversible and verifiable manner, within a temporal time frame agreed multilaterally. Such instrument is a necessary measure on nuclear disarmament and would fulfill the obligation of States Parties to the NPT as stated in Article VI of the Treaty. It is the intention of the CELAC member States to start exploring concrete and practical ways in which this instrument could be negotiated and adopted as soon as possible.

10. CELAC welcomes with appreciation the decision of the General Assembly to hold a high level conference no later than 2018 to identify measures and actions to eliminate nuclear weapons at the shortest possible term, aiming at adopting a treaty banning the development, production, procurement, testing, stockpiling, transfer, use or threat to use of

nuclear weapons, and providing for their destruction within a multilaterally agreed timeframe.

CELAC and OEWG

11. In this regard, CELAC supports the establishment of the Open-Ended Working Group in accordance with resolution 70/33 approved on 7 December by the General Assembly of the United Nations and commits to work in this forum in an active and constructive manner, continuing with the Latin American and Caribbean political and moral leadership on this subject, in order to contribute towards the fulfillment of the Group's mandate to substantively address measures, and the concrete and effective legal dispositions necessary to the urgent adoption of a comprehensive convention providing for the prohibition and total elimination of nuclear weapons and allowing to establish and maintain a nuclear weapon free world. CELAC looks forward to presenting concrete contributions to this forum.